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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/561,759	07/28/2006	Jaap Bakker	P06937US0	1638
34082 7590 05/02/2007 ZARLEY LAW FIRM P.L.C. CAPITAL SQUARE 400 LOCUST, SUITE 200 DES MOINES, IA 50309-2350			EXAMINER SINGH, KAVEL	
			ART UNIT 3651	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 05/02/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/561,759

Applicant(s)

BAKKER ET AL.

Examiner

Kavel P. Singh

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 July 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 21 December 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/21/07.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 17, the word "means" is preceded by the word(s) "displacing product" in an attempt to use a "means" clause to recite a claim element as a means for performing a specified function. However, since no function is specified by the word(s) preceding "means," it is impossible to determine the equivalents of the element, as required by 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph. See *Ex parte Klumb*, 159 USPQ 694 (Bd. App. 1967).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-5,9-13,15-17, and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tarlton U.S. Patent No. 4,627,529.

Claim 1, Tarlton teaches a plastic guide profile (42), and a support structure (32) supporting the guide profile (42), characterized in that the guide profile (42) is engaged

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at least at two spaced-apart positions by the support structure (32), at least one engaging position of which consists of a free support of the guide profile (42) on the support structure (32) such that the freely supporting side of the guide profile (42) is displaceable relative to the support structure (Fig. 1).

Claim 2, Tarlton teaches the guide profile (42) is coupled rigidly on one side to the support structure (Fig. 2).

Claims 3 and 4, Tarlton teaches the guide profile (42) is provided with a three-dimensional contact surface (34) at the position where it supports freely on the support structure (32) (Fig. 3).

Claim 5, Tarlton teaches the free support of the guide profile (42) on the support structure (32) is formed by a recess in the guide profile (42) in which an engaging part (34) of the support structure (32) engages close-fittingly and displaceably (Fig. 5).

Claim 6, Tarlton teaches a free space is enclosed between the engaging part of the support structure and a part of the recess on the side remote from the engaging part, in which recess the engaging part is axially displaceable (Fig. 3).

Claim 7, Tarlton teaches the guide profile (42) is provided with a guide surface and the recess with the engaging part displaceable therein are formed such that the direction of displacement of the engaging part relative to the recess is at least substantially parallel to the guide surface (Fig. 1).

Claim 9, Tarlton teaches the guide profile (42) is manufactured from a high-molecular polyethylene (C3 L51-52).

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Claim 10, Tarlton teaches the support structure is manufactured from metal (C4 L42-43).

Claim 11, Tarlton teaches the engaging part of the support structure and a recess cooperating therewith in the guide profile (42) are at least substantially cylindrical (Fig.5).

Claim 12, Tarlton teaches the guide profile (42) is provided on opposite sides with engaging positions (Fig.5).

Claim 13, Tarlton teaches a plurality of mutually connecting guides wherein a plurality of guide profiles are placed connecting with a gap to each other (Fig.5).

Claim 15, Tarlton teaches a plurality of profile parts are engaged by a single support structure (Fig.2).

Claim 16, Tarlton teaches the plurality of profile parts form a helical guide track (Fig.1).

Claim 17, Tarlton teaches displacing means for displacing the products for conditioning along the guide, a housing at least partially enclosing the assembled guide and the displacing means, and conditioning means for regulating the atmosphere in the housing (C2 L10-15).

Claim 19, Tarlton teaches a vertically oriented, helical conveyor track with a housing placed there around (Fig.1).

Claim 20, Tarlton teaches a rotatable core is placed in the helical conveyor track (Fig.1).

Claim 21, Tarlton teaches the displacing means comprise a driven endless conveyor track (C1 L53-55).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

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The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 8 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tarlton U.S. Patent No. 4,627,529.

Claim 8, Tarlton teaches the tight fit of the engaging part of the support structure in the recess in the guide profile leaves free a slotted space between the engaging part and the inside of the recess of a maximum of 3 mm, preferably less than 1 mm (Fig. 1,3).

Claim 14, Tarlton teaches the gap between the profile parts is between 5 and 35 mm at atmospheric temperature (Fig. 3).

The recitation of the dimension of engaging part into the recess or the gap between the profile part appear to be an obvious design choice and expedient in view of *Gardner v. TEC Systems Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1338, 220 USPQ 777 (Fed. Cir. 1984). The Federal Circuit held that, where the only difference between the prior art and the claims was a recitation of relative dimensions of the claimed device and a device having the claimed relative dimensions would not perform differently than the prior art device, the claimed device was not patentably distinct from the prior art device.

Claims 8 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tarlton U.S. Patent No. 4,627,529 in view of Thompson U.S. Patent No. 1,651,912.

Claim 18, Tarlton does not as Thompson teaches the conditioning means comprise temperature-regulating means (P1 L5-10). It would have been obvious to one of

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ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate temperature controllable features as taught by Thompson into the invention of Tarlton in order to diversify the products the system can handle.

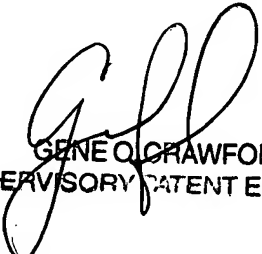
Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ms. Kavel P. Singh whose telephone number is (571) 272-2362. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gene Crawford can be reached on (571) 272-6911. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

KPS


GENE Q. CRAWFORD
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER